

FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

22-05

ORLEANS

EAS.596

Town/City: Eastham

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): South Eastham

Photograph



View from east.

Address: 160 Ellis Road

Historic Name: William R. & Ada Payne Rental House

Uses: Present: single-family residence

Original: single-family residence

Date of Construction: c. 1962

Source: tax records, deeds, visual analysis

Style/Form: undetermined

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete block

Wall/Trim: wood shingles/wood

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: none

Major Alterations (*with dates*): addition to east side (c. 2000)

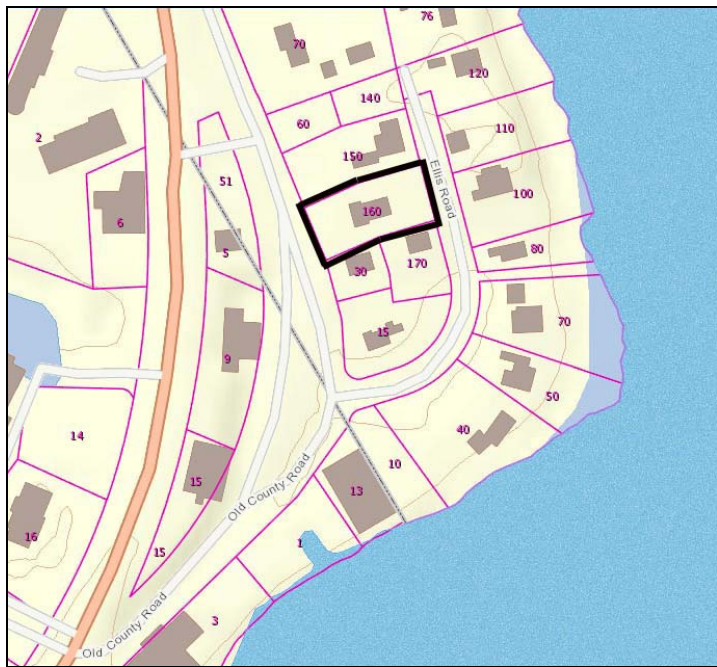
Condition: good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: .32 acre

Setting: This property is within a single family residential subdivision, double fronted by Ellis Road on the east and Old State Highway on the west. Commercial properties are located across Old State Highway.

Locus Map (north at top)



Recorded by: Larson Fisher Associates, Inc. with Kathryn Grover

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date: April 2013

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

This single family dwelling appears to have been a modest ranch-style house with rear tuck-under garage when first constructed (despite the footprint on the, judging by the lower gable roof ridge of its westernmost section. It may have had a cross-gabled front pavilion which was then expanded c. 2000. (No building permits for the property could be located.)¹ The addition to the east side of the house has a higher ridge line than what is presumed to be the earlier section and has a much more modern appearance—its two-bay Ellis Rd. facade has a casement window and a sliding glass door giving out onto a wood deck. A large brick chimney on the south side of the front pavilion may define where the western edge of the addition. The entire house has been clad in wood shingles, trimmed with white painted wood typical of Cape Cod.

Retaining walls extend out from the rear (west) facade of the house and curve around to the sides to mediate the change in topography between the Ellis Rd. portion of the property and the lower Old State Highway half. There are a number of mature shrubs and trees on the lot; a wood rail fence borders the east property line.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Town records state that the house at 160 Ellis Road was built in 1929, but it appears that the lots on which it was built were among the few that Brewster developer Gilbert Everett Ellis had not sold at the time of his death, in January 1944. The house stands wholly or mostly on lots 18 and 25 of a twenty-seven-lot subdivision Ellis platted in April 1925. Ellis was a farmer, realtor, and owner of a shore net and pound fishery and was born in Brewster in 1867; his father, Thaddeus, was a fisherman, and his mother, Caroline J. Norway, was born in Spain. Ellis began his career as a store clerk when he was fourteen, if not younger. At the time of his marriage in 1887 he worked as a salesman. The 1900 census shows Ellis as a fisherman; the 1910 census shows him more specifically as a weir fisherman. He was among a declining number of Cape fishermen in what was termed the “shore net and pound fishery,” which used large nets attached to a wood framework extending from the shore outward to catch such inshore schooling fish as herring and menhaden; these were sold as bait to the offshore fishing industry, and other species caught in the nets were sold to urban fresh-fish markets after rail lines reached the Cape in the 1870s. In 1914 the town of Brewster granted Ellis a permit to build six fish pounds in its coastal waters, and by 1920 Ellis was one of three Brewster men who ran a pound fishery; he employed seven men, among the most of any of the 43 pound fisheries in the state, and caught \$3100 of fish.²

Once a prosperous industry on Cape Cod, the pound fishery began to decline after World War I, and by 1920 Ellis was probably preparing to leave the industry. The 1920 census shows him as a farmer, and by 1929 he is listed as a realtor. In September 1924 he bought four acres in South Eastham bordered mostly by the state highway, Town Cove, and what was, for a brief time, a canal that connected Town Cove to the river at Boat Meadow on Cape Cod Bay, a distance of less than a mile.³ Ellis acquired the tract from New York City insurance broker Frederick Dorflinger Suydam, whose father, William Farrington Suydam, was an affluent Pennsylvania silk manufacturer and a summer resident of Orleans. The tract was part of the far larger holdings of Captain Heman Smith and his wife Louisiana Crosby Smith, who lived at 70 Old State Highway (EAS.43). In 1881, five years after the Smiths were lost at sea in the wreck of the bark *Burnside*, their children sold the property to their sibling Francis M. Smith (1852-1922), who in 1898 sold it to Somerville carpenter George S. Newcomb, an Orleans native. In 1913 Newcomb's son, George E. Newcomb, sold the four-acre tract to Albert F. Sherman, superintendent of the quarantine station on Gallup's Island in Boston Harbor, and in 1916 Sherman and his wife sold it to Frederick Suydam's mother, Mary Elizabeth Dorflinger Suydam.⁴

By January 1926 Ellis had built a house—what is now 76 Old State Highway—on the northernmost 1.5 acres of the tract, and in that month he sold that 1.5-acre tract with its buildings to Roscoe S. Walton, a Maine-born pharmacist turned innkeeper. April 1926 town assessor's records show Ellis with 2.5 acres and no structures; he in fact did not begin to sell any of the house lots in his subdivision until April 1928. He sold at least nineteen of the twenty-seven lots between 1928 and February 1941. After his death his widow, Lydia Foster Cahoon Ellis, sold lots 18 and 22-25 to Marie L. Hayden of Brockton; the last four lots border Old

¹ The approximate date of 2000 for the eastward expansion of the house is based on the Town of Eastham Assessor's records which note a jump in sales price from \$152,000 in 1997 to \$460,000 in 2004.

² On the pound fishery, see Matthew McKenzie, *Clearing the Coastline: The Nineteenth-Century Ecological & Cultural Transformation of Cape Cod* (Hanover, NH, and London: University Press of New England, 2010), especially 11-12, 33, 91, 96, 138-39, 164, 172; *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Harbor and Land Commissioners For the Year 1914* (Boston: Wright & Potter, 1915), 100; and “Returns from the Shore Net and Pound Fisheries for the Year 1920,” *Annual Report of the Division of Fisheries and Game for the Year Ending November 30, 1920* (Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Co., 1921), 151-58.

³ Alice A. Lowe, comp., *Nauset on Cape Cod: A History of Eastham*, 4th ed. (Eastham, MA: Eastham Historical Society, 1968), 35-36, states that the canal was dug in 1804 through “land following very nearly the boundary line between the towns of Eastham and Orleans” and became known as “Jeremiah's Gutter” where it crossed the property of Jeremiah Smith. A shallow channel, the canal filled quickly, and in 1817 the Eastham and Orleans Canal Proprietors built a wider one, but it was abandoned at some unstated later date.

⁴ William H. Smith, Boston; Mary M. Smith and Nellie J. Smith, all formerly of Eastham, to Francis M. Smith, 1 November 1881, Barnstable County Registry of Deeds (BCD) 148:366; Francis M. Smith, Somerville, to George S. Newcomb, 5 November 1898, BCD 296:12; George S. Newcomb to George E. Newcomb, 28 May 1909, BCD 296:105; George E. Newcomb to Albert F. Sherman, Boston, 6 January 1913, BCD 321:21; Albert F. and Emma L. Sherman to Mary E. Suydam, Montclair NJ, 15 August 1916, BCD 345:440; Frederick D. Suydam, NYC, to Gilbert E. Ellis, East Brewster, 4 September 1924, BCD 409:454.

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State Highway. Lydia Ellis's deed to Hayden carried the language her late husband had typically included in deeds for undeveloped land—that "no cottage or house is to be built nearer than ten feet to a boundary line of other lots or nearer than twenty feet to a road," that "modern plumbing" (meaning septic tanks and cesspools) be used, that no dwelling cost less than \$1500, and that only one dwelling be built on the lot except for such "necessary outbuildings" as garages.⁵

Born in New Hampshire in 1892, Marie L. Hayden was the wife of James J. Hayden, a Brockton liquor store proprietor in 1940. James Hayden, born in Roxbury in 1887, had earlier been an actor and a theater manager; in 1913 he was part of the Lindsay Morison Stock Company of Lynn and received notice in a 1913 issue of *the New York Dramatic Mirror* as "one of the most popular members in the cast" of the play *Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford*.⁶ The 1930 census shows him as a theater manager living in Brockton with his wife Marie and mother-in-law, Swedish immigrant Vicklinda Trask. He was in the liquor business by 1935 and was president of the liquor concern J. J. Hayden Company in 1949.

Neither Marie nor James Hayden appear in Eastham tax records for 1937, and those records combined with deeds indicate that a house was not built at 160 Ellis Road until the two lots were sold to William Rand Payne and his wife Ada in June 1950; that deed contains the same language about future construction on the lot as all prior deeds for it had featured.⁷ By 1954, tax records and deeds document, the Paynes also owned lots 19 and 20 (the site of 150 Ellis Road), a house and boat house at 100 Ellis, which they had acquired in June 1945 (lots 4 and 5), and a cottage and garage at 110 Ellis (lots 3 and part of lot 2). From available records it is not possible to determine where the Paynes lived, though it seems most likely that their home was at 100 Ellis (called a "house" and not a "cottage" in tax records and valued at \$3300 compared to \$2000 for each of the cottages) and that they rented the other two properties.

Born in Orleans in December 1896, William R. Payne was the son of Simeon Paine, a longtime junk dealer in that town, and his wife Mary E. Higgins. By 1930 William Payne was living in the Boston suburb of Quincy and working as a car inspector for the state; his wife Ada Nelson Payne, born in Quincy in 1898, assembled arch supports in a factory. In 1930 the couple lived with her father, Charles W. Nelson, a carpenter who had emigrated from Canada in 1889, and Ada Nelson Payne's married sister Ethel and her husband, Swedish immigrant Karl E. Johnson.

Tax records for 1954 indicate that only one cottage and garage stood on the lots that comprise 150 and 160 Ellis Road., and that was almost certainly 150 Ellis Road. Visual analysis suggests that 160 Ellis was built soon after that date.

In May 1961 the Paynes subdivided the lots they owned between Old State Highway and Ellis Road, and in October that year they sold 160 Ellis Road to Eloise Ritterbusch Witt, the wife of automobile dealer Henry William Witt of Dobbs Ferry, New York; in 1938 Witt became owner of Dobbs Ferry Motors, established by his German immigrant father J. Henry Witt in 1925. Witt owned the Ellis Road property until 1989, and the property changed hands relatively often until 2009, when current owner George A. Hutchinson IV acquired it for rental purposes.⁸

⁵ Lydia F. Ellis, Brewster, to Marie L. Hayden, Brockton, 12 August 1944, BCD 617:149.

⁶ "Stock Company News," *New York Dramatic Mirror*, 26 February 1913, 12.

⁷ Marie L. Hayden, Brockton, to William R. and Ada M. Payne, 14 June 1950, 757:465.

⁸ "Resubdivision Plan of Land in Eastham, Mass. As Surveyed for William R. Payne et ux," May 1961, BCP 165:69; William R. and Ada M. Payne to Eloise Ritterbusch Witt, Dobbs Ferry NY, 16 October 1961, BCD 1133:280; Eloise Ritterbusch Witt, Naples FL, to John L. and Joan E. Grant, Orleans, 22 November 1989, BCD 6982:295; Robert S. Salva, 160 Ellis Road, to George A. Hutchinson IV, New Haven CT, 10 April 2009, BCD 23603:19. Town of Eastham building department records include correspondence dated Sept. 24, 2009, which approve the subject property as a "new rental."

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MAPS

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PHOTOGRAPHS

(credit Larson Fisher Associates, 2012-2013 unless otherwise noted)



Views from west and southwest.



SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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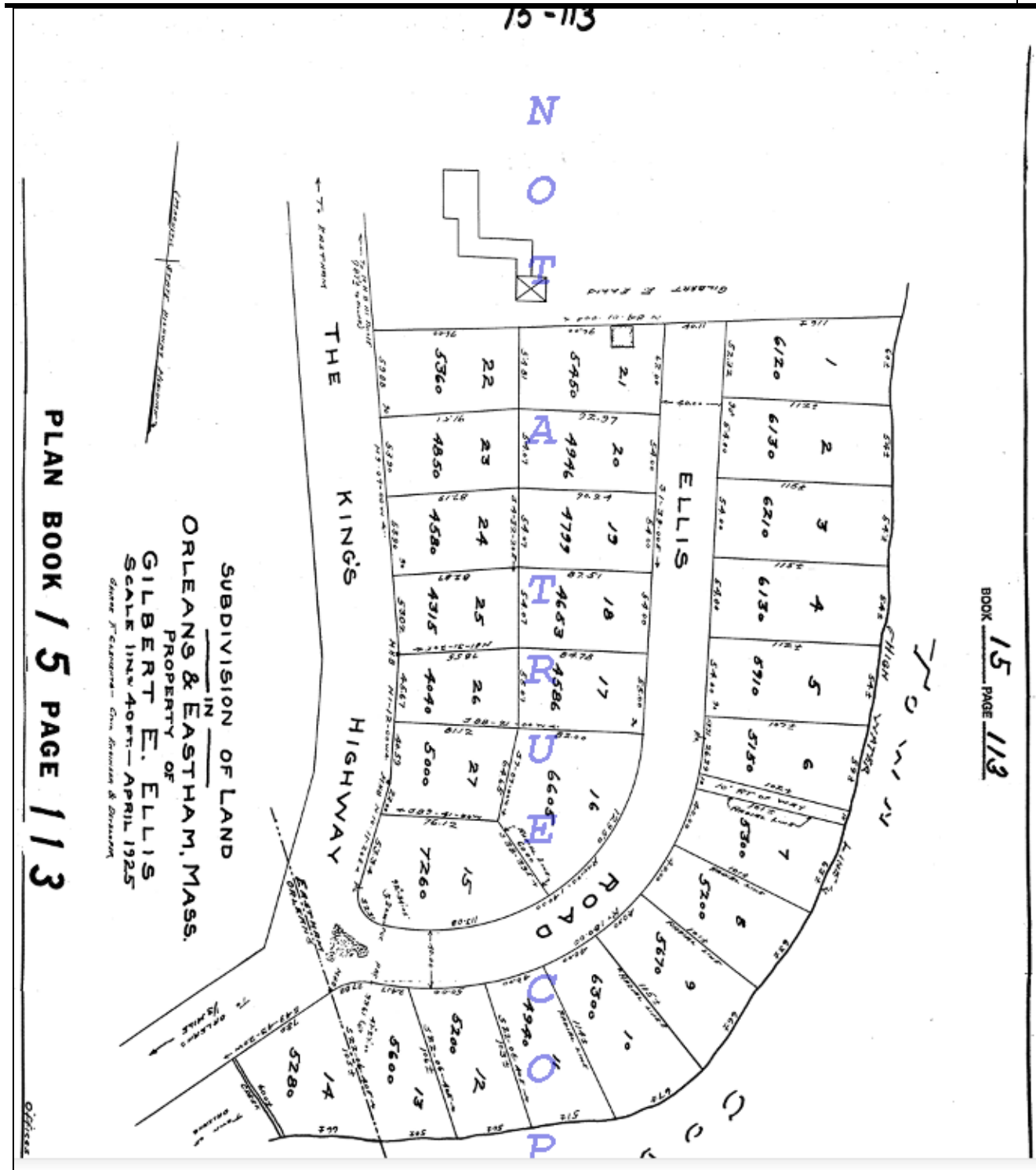
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Ellis subdivision plan of 1925 (BCP 15:113): 160 Ellis Road occupies lots 18 and 25 and parts of lots 19 and 24.

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